

# **PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING REPORT**

## **Blackfeet Community Water Project**

### **Prepared For: Blackfeet Tribe**

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April 25, 2001



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
BILLINGS AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE  
BROWNING, MONTANA

## **Project Summary**

The Town of Browning water supply has not been able to meet the demands of a growing community for many years. Water shortages have occurred several times over the last few years due to inadequate water supplies and infrastructure problems. These water shortages have been well documented. Browning currently utilizes ground water, which is of poor quality and quantity, to supply the community with drinking water. There has been an extensive amount of research and exploratory drilling over the years to locate an adequate ground water source near Browning. However, all attempts have failed. The ground water sources have been exhausted and other means of supplying the residents of Browning need to be developed.

East Glacier is another community on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation that has had water problems for years. The community currently utilizes Midvale Creek for its drinking water. This is a surface water source with no filtration. The only method of treatment is chlorination prior to supplying water to the community. East Glacier's water system is in direct violation of EPA's Surface Water Treatment Rule of the Safe Drinking Water Act. A Notice of Violation was sent to the East Glacier Water and Sewer District on August 9, 1993. East Glacier has been on a Boil Water Order since then. There are substantial health risks to the residents of East Glacier without an adequate water treatment facility.

The proposed project is to construct a water treatment plant to serve both Browning and East Glacier. The treatment plant would utilize water from the Lower Two Medicine Reservoir. The goal of the treatment plant is to meet the present and future water quality standards set fourth by the Surface Water Treatment Rule of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments. The water treatment plant and water distribution mains will be owned and operated by the Blackfeet Tribe. The Town of Browning would then purchase water from the Tribe. Tentative plans are currently being discussed to have the Blackfeet Tribe take over the operation and maintenance of East Glacier's water and sewer systems. In addition to taking over the water and sewer system, the Blackfeet Tribe will also be assuming an existing debt the East Glacier Water and Sewer District has with Rural Development. The Tribe is agreeing to this to get this project moving forward and also assist East Glacier since they cannot afford to pay back this debt.

The Blackfeet Tribe, Browning, East Glacier and IHS have put a considerable amount of time into developing the project. The estimated cost to provide safe drinking water to East Glacier and Browning is \$12,500,000. The Blackfeet Tribe, Browning, and East Glacier have all pursued and received funding for this project. The total amount of funding committed to this project is \$4,427,000. Efforts will continue until enough funding is received to construct this desperately needed project.

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